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**Testimony of Patrease Hawkins  
Student, University of Connecticut, School of Social Work**

**Appropriations Committee**

**March 2, 2011**

**In Support of H.B. No. 6380 AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE  
BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2013.**

Good Morning Senator Harp, Representative Candelaria, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Patrease Hawkins. I am a MSW Student at UCONN School of Social Work. Thank you for your opportunity to testify today.

I am here to testify in support of the Governor's budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).

Governor Malloy is proposing a budget that largely protects both children and adults with mental illnesses in the State of Connecticut. The emphasis on cost effective, prevention vs. costly, institutional and emergency care is key in this budget. By focusing on prevention and community care, the budget is helping to ensure that individuals with psychiatric disabilities get the care they need within their communities. These solutions save taxpayer monies and improve the quality of life for Connecticut residents. The cost of hospitalization and inpatient care is harmful to these individuals and society at large.

The budget invest in supportive housing, expands the mental health waiver to divert and discharge people with mental illnesses from nursing homes, invests in jail diversion and re-entry programs, moves forward with the raise the age initiative, and extends coverage for smoking cessation to all Medicaid recipients.

It is for these reasons that I support the Governor's budget because it will increase the quality of life for individuals with mental illnesses who deserve quality care and treatment. Although I support the majority of the governor's proposed bill, I am opposed to imposing co-pays on the states most vulnerable individuals. For the most part, individuals living with psychiatric disabilities are not able to afford co-pays. Providing quality care means ensuring that all persons living with psychiatric disabilities can access the medication they need to live with dignity.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important bill.

Patrease Hawkins  
University of Connecticut  
School of Social Work,  
MSW Student, 2012  
[Patrease.hawkins@uconn.edu](mailto:Patrease.hawkins@uconn.edu) (301)-806-1988